

Restoration of the Syriac Pontifical and the Beginning of Liturgical Reform in the Syro-Malabar Church

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Introduction

We have already published a book containing forty-four important documents concerning the revision and publication of the Chaldean and Syro-Malabar Pontifical.¹ The documents presented in the book, together with our brief introductions, meticulously reconstruct the main events connected with the Pontifical from 1896 to 1958, highlighting the circumstances of the start of liturgical reform in the Syro-Malabar Church. In this short study, based mainly on the documents published in the aforementioned book, we will focus our attention on the endeavours of the Western missionaries to introduce the Roman Pontifical among the St. Thomas Christians, the effective use of the Roman Pontifical since the Synod of Diamper in 1599, the historical and liturgical context of the revision and restoration of the Chaldean and Syro-Malabar Pontifical with papal approval, the compilation of a new series of books for pontifical ceremonies in some dioceses and finally the promulgation of a canonically approved Pontifical for the entire Syro-Malabar Church.

1. Use of Roman Pontifical in the Malabar Church from 1585 to 1896

From time immemorial until the arrival of the Western missionaries in the XVI century, the St. Thomas Christians, who followed the basic East

1 *Roman Pontifical into Syriac and the Beginning of Liturgical Reform in the Syro-Malabar Church: History of the Revision and Publication of the Chaldean and Syro-Malabar Pontifical*, by P. Pallath & J. Kollara, Kottayam, 2012 (hereafter, *Roman Pontifical into Syriac*).

Syrian liturgical tradition, used the Syriac or Chaldean Pontifical for ordinations and other episcopal ceremonies.² Generally the validity of the sacred Orders, conferred according to the East Syrian tradition, was not questioned even by the Western missionaries. However, the third provincial Council of Goa (1585), in which Mar Abraham, the last Chaldean Metropolitan of the St Thomas Christians was constrained to participate, declared that the holy Orders conferred by him according to the Syriac rite were invalid because of the lack of proper matter. With regard to this, Alexander Valignano SJ in his letter to the Jesuit General Claudio Acquaviva, dated 17 December 1585, stated:

Among other things it was found that sacred Orders were conferred in such a way that it seemed to us and to the whole Council that the candidates were not really ordained, because, though the substance of the *form* was somehow present in the words, the *matter* necessary for this sacrament was not applied in any manner, since in the consecration of the priests neither the chalice with wine nor the paten with bread was handed over to them, but only the Missal. The same fault of the matter was also found in conferring all the other Orders.³

In fact, departing from the scriptural, apostolic and patristic traditions and the millennial common practice of the Church, from the beginning of the eleventh century the Latin Church began to consider the handing over of the instruments (*traditio instrumentorum*) to the candidate as the matter for conferring the holy Orders. After treating the five sacraments, the Council of Florence explicitly stated:

The sixth is the sacrament of Orders. Its matter is the object by whose handing over the Order is conferred. So the priesthood is bestowed by the handing over of a chalice with wine and a paten with bread; the diaconate by the giving of the book of the gospels;

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- 2 Cf. P. Pallath, *Unity of Christian Initiation with Special Reference to the Syro-Malabar Church*, Bangalore 2017, 57-62.
- 3 Letter of Alessandro Valignano, in J. Wicki, "Quellen zum 3. Provinzialkonzil von Goa (1585)", *Annuario Historiae Conciliorum* 5 (1973) 382-407; original with Engl. trans.in P. Pallath, *The Provincial Councils of Goa and the Church of St Thomas Christians*, Kottayam 2005, 184-191; cf. also, A. De Gouvea, *Jornada do Arcebispo de Goa Dom Frey Aleixo de Menezes Primaz da India Oriental, Religioso da Ordem de S. Agostinho*, Coimbra 1606, 9.

the subdiaconate by the handing over of an empty chalice with an empty paten on it; and similarly for the other Orders by allotting things connected with their ministry [...].⁴

Despite this affirmation, neither any ecumenical council nor the Apostolic See of Rome ever declared invalid the holy Orders conferred in the Eastern Churches without the handing on of the instruments. Notwithstanding this, in accordance with the Latin position of that time the provincial council of Goa judged invalid all the holy Orders conferred by Mar Abraham over a period of 28 years (1557-1585) and enjoined him to re-consecrate all persons ordained by him, utilizing the matter and form of the Roman rite. Since the ordination to priesthood was also declared invalid, there followed automatically the drastic consequence of the invalidity of all the sacraments administered by those priests.

The Western missionaries considered not only the sacrament of holy Orders, but also all other sacraments either invalid or nonexistent, because of the defect of matter or form, according to the Scholastic theology.⁵ In order to remedy the situation, the provincial council of Goa (1585) ordered that the Roman Ritual, the Roman Missal, the Roman Breviary and the Roman Pontifical should be translated into Chaldean (Syriac) for the use of the St. Thomas Christians.⁶

After the conclusion of the provincial council, under the guidance of Francis Ros SJ, appointed by the same council as an aid to Mar Abraham for the execution of its decrees in Malabar, the Roman liturgical books were translated into Syriac. The Latin Pontifical was also translated and Mar Abraham re-ordained some of his priests according to the Latin rite in Syriac language. In the letter to the Jesuit General Claudio Aquaviva on 6 January 1587 Ros wrote:

4 Cf. The Council of Florence, session 8 (22 November 1439); Bull of Union with the Armenians, *Enchiridion symbolorum*, no. 1326; J. Neuner & J. Dupuis (eds.), *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*, seventh edition, New York 2001, no. 1705; N. P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1, London 1990, 549.

5 For details, P. Palath, "The Sacraments of the Church of St Thomas Christians in India and the Synod of Diamper", in *Ephrem's Theological Journal*, vol. 11, no. 2 (October 2007) 121-146.

6 Session 3, decree 7, *Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae Regum*, Appendix 1, Olisipone 1872, 75; original with Engl. trans. in P. Pallath, *The Provincial Councils of Goa and the Church of St Thomas Christians*, 115-116.

[...] already the books began to be corrected and the clerics who had not been rightly ordained were re-ordained in the Roman manner in Syriac language, because during the last year the Archbishop and I together made a Pontifical of all ordinations according to the Latin rite and translated it into Syriac.⁷

This indicates that after the provincial council Mar Abraham cooperated with Fr Ros for the correction of Syriac books and for the translation of Roman liturgical books into Syriac. In fact they translated the rite of all ordinations from the Latin Pontifical into Syriac and Mar Abraham also re-ordained some of his priests and other clerics using such Latin-Syriac texts.

The Synod of Diamper (1599) confirmed the position of the provincial council of Goa and definitively determined the matter and form of the sacrament of holy Orders in harmony with the Latin tradition. After the preliminary doctrinal statement on the sacrament of holy Orders, the Synod enacted 23 decrees on the discipline of the clergy, among which the endorsement of obligatory celibacy, already in vogue especially after the third provincial council of Goa in 1585.⁸

In accordance with the Scholastic theology, the Synod determined that the matter of the sacrament of holy Orders is the handing over of the instruments to the candidate. In fact, the Synod decreed:

The matter of this sacrament is that which is delivered to the person that is ordained, for the exercise of that order he has received, to the priests, a chalice with wine in it and a paten with bread; to a deacon, the book of the Gospels; and to subdeacon, an empty chalice and paten, and so as to the other minor orders [...] ⁹

The form of the sacrament of Orders is no more the consecratory prayer at the moment of the imposition of hands, but “the words spoken by the bishop when he delivers to everyone that which belongs to his

7 Rome, Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (ARSI), *Goa-Mal.* 13, fol. 344; J. Wicki, *Documenta Indica*, vol. XIV (1979) 565.

8 Synod of Diamper, session VII, decrees 1-23.

9 Synod of Diamper, session VII, preliminary decree on the *Doctrine of the Sacrament of Orders*.

ministry and the exercise of his order".¹⁰ The minister of this sacrament is evidently a bishop. The Synod of Diamper also substituted the minor Orders of the East Syrian tradition with those of the Latin Church at that epoch, namely porter, lector, exorcist and acolyte.¹¹

As a parenthesis we would like to indicate that after the elapse of several years the doctrinal question of the matter of the sacrament of holy Orders was definitively settled by Pope Pius XII in harmony with the apostolic tradition and common praxis of the Church. On 30 November 1947 the Pope made the following solemn declaration:

By virtue of our supreme apostolic authority we declare with sure knowledge and, as far as it may be necessary, we determine and ordain: the matter of the holy Orders of diaconate, presbyterate and episcopate is the laying on of hands alone and the sole form is the words determining the application of the matter, words by which the effects of the sacrament – that is, the power of Order and the grace of the Holy Spirit – are unequivocally signified, and which for this reason are accepted and used by the Church. This leads us to declare and, if other provisions have been legitimately made in the past at any time, we now determine that, at least in future, the handing over of the instruments is not necessary for the validity of the holy Orders of the diaconate, the presbyterate and the episcopate.¹²

With this decision of the Pope the Latin Church returned to the apostolic, scriptural and patristic traditions, as well as to the millennial common tradition of the Churches of the East and the West. Moreover all discussions about the validity of holy Orders of those Eastern Churches which do not have the ceremony of the handing on of the instruments were definitively terminated.

The Synod of Diamper did not explicitly speak of the translation of the rites of ordination into Syriac, since this had already been done after

10 Synod of Diamper, session VII, preliminary decree on the *Doctrine of the Sacrament of Orders*.

11 Synod of Diamper, session VII, preliminary decree on the *Doctrine of the Sacrament of Orders*.

12 Apostolic constitution *Sacramentum Ordinis*, in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 40 (1948) 6; *Enchiridion symbolorum*, no. 3859; J. Neuner & J. Dupuis (eds.), *The Christian Faith*, no. 1737.

the third provincial council of Goa in 1585 and Mar Abraham himself ordained some priests using such Latin-Syriac texts. Moreover, the Syriac version of the Roman Pontifical was not needed, since one of the main objectives of the archbishop of Goa and the Western missionaries in convoking the Synod was to suppress the Eastern hierarchy in India and to appoint Latin bishops for the governance of the Church, who would use the Roman Pontifical in Latin itself.

In fact, with the Synod of Diamper the hierarchical relationship of the Church of St Thomas Christians with the Chaldean patriarchate was severed and Latin bishops were appointed to govern them. The aforementioned partial Syriac translation of the Roman Pontifical was never printed, because the Latin bishops who governed the Church until 1896, with the exception of the first bishop Francis Ros SJ (1599-1624) did not know Syriac. Hence the succeeding Latin bishops performed all pontifical ceremonies, such as the consecration of churches, consecration of holy oils, all ordinations and the sacrament of confirmation according to the Roman Pontifical in Latin language.

However, the partial Syriac Roman Pontifical was again utilized for liturgical celebrations for a short period of time. Towards the end of the second apostolic mission of Bishop Joseph of St Mary Sebastiani to eradicate the schism in the Indian Church, originated after the *Coonan Cross Oath* (1653), constrained by the circumstances, he elected and consecrated Fr Alexander Parampil as bishop of the Catholic St Thomas Christians on 1 February 1663. For the use of this native bishop, before his departure from Malabar on 14 February 1663, Sebastiani made arrangements for the improvement of the rites of Ordination already translated from Latin into Syriac and used by the first Latin Bishop Francis Ros (1599-1624) and for the translation of some other parts of the Roman Pontifical.¹³

After the death of Alexander Parampil on 2 January 1687, native bishops were not appointed and hence the partial Syriac translation of the Roman Pontifical, remained in the manuscript form, was not used for liturgical celebrations. Several years later when Joseph Cariattil was

13 Cf. Sebastiani Giuseppe di Santa Maria, *Seconda Spedizione all'Indie Orientali*, Roma 1672, 147; P. Pallath, *The Grave Tragedy of the Church of St Thomas Christians in India and the Apostolic Mission of Sebastiani*, Changanacherry 2006, 215.

consecrated bishop in 1783, he utilized a copy of the said translations found in Portugal for a few Pontifical ceremonies.¹⁴ In brief, we can affirm that from 1585 on, the Roman Pontifical began to be used for episcopal ceremonies in the Indian Eastern Church, and during short intervals the Syriac version of the same was employed.

2. Historical Context of the Restoration of Syro-Malabar Pontifical

After about three centuries (1599-1886) of Western governance over the St Thomas Christians, when the Latin hierarchy was established in India on 1 September 1886, the ancient archdiocese of Cranganore was definitively suppressed, the vicariate apostolic of Verapoly was elevated to the status of a metropolitan archdiocese of the Latin Church with Quilon as its suffragan see and all the Catholic St Thomas Christians became members of the said archdiocese.¹⁵ However, with the apostolic letter *Quod iampridem* of 20 May 1887, Pope Leo XIII separated the Eastern Catholics from the Latin Christians of the archdiocese of Verapoly and constituted for the former two Syro-Malabar vicariates apostolic, Trichur and Kottayam (later named Changanacherry),¹⁶ but the vicars apostolic were still Latins: Charles Lavigne, titular bishop of Milevum and vicar apostolic of Changanacherry (1887-1896) and Adolf Edwin Medlycott, titular bishop of Tricomia and vicar apostolic of Trichur (1887-1896).

With the apostolic brief *Quae rei sacrae* of 28 July 1896 Pope Leo XIII reorganized the territory, erecting the three vicariates apostolic of Trichur, Ernakulam and Changanacherry.¹⁷ Three native priests were appointed as vicars apostolic: John Menacherry, titular bishop of Paralus and vicar apostolic of Trichur, Mathew Makil, titular bishop of Trallesin Asia and vicar apostolic of Changanacherry and Aloysius Pazheparambil, titular bishop of Tium and vicar apostolic of Ernakulam. The Apostolic

14 Cf. T. Paremmakkal, *The Varthamanappusthakam*, translated into English with an introduction and notes by P. J. Podipara (OCA 190), Rome 1971, 238-239.

15 Cf. Leo XIII, *Humanae salutis auctor*, 1 September 1886, *Leonis XIII Pontificis Maximi Acta*, vol. 5, Romae 1886, 164-179; P. Pallath, *Important Roman Documents concerning the Catholic Church in India*, Kottayam 2004, 152-173.

16 Cf. Leo XIII, *Quod iampridem*, 20 May 1887, *Leonis XIII Pontificis Maximi Acta*, vol. VII, Romae 1888, 106-108; P. Pallath, *Important Roman Documents*, 190-193.

17 Leo XIII, *Quae rei sacrae*, 28 July 1896, *Leonis XIII Pontificis Maximi Acta*, vol. XVI, Romae 1897, 229-232; P. Pallath, *Important Roman Documents*, 194-197.

Delegate Ladislao Michele Zaleski consecrated the first three Indian bishops on 25 October 1896 in the cathedral church of Kandy in Sri Lanka, where he had the residence. Later with the apostolic brief *In Universi* dated 29 August 1911 Pope Pius X separated all the Southist parishes and churches from the vicariates of Changanacherry and Ernakulam and erected the new vicariate of Kottayam exclusively for the Southist community.¹⁸

3. Native Bishops and the Question of the Pontifical

With the consecration of the first three Syro-Malabar bishops there emerged the question, which Pontifical the new bishops should use for the consecration of churches, ordinations and blessing of the oil. During the first meeting after the episcopal consecration, the first three Syro-Malabar bishops unanimously decided to use the Roman Pontifical, translated into Syriac, because according to them, among the three Pontificals (Roman, Antiochene and Chaldean) the Roman Pontifical was the best suited to the Syro-Malabar rite. As regards this decision on 31 October 1896, Apostolic Delegate Zaleski wrote to Propaganda Fide as follows: "Last Monday we had a long conversation, which the Vicars Apostolic called a liturgical conference. I asked whether it would not be possible to supplicate His Holiness to simply grant them the Pontifical of the Syriac Church. But the bishops responded that this was not possible and that they and also the people would prefer that a simple translation of the Roman Pontifical be made. And in fact the Syro-Malabar rite has to be considered as a special rite. Also the holy Mass differs very much from the Syriac or Chaldean holy Mass. Also their Missal is different, so that they cannot use the Chaldean (Syriac) Missal".¹⁹ Towards the end of the same letter Zaleski summarizes the result of the first liturgical meeting of the Syro-Malabar bishops:

The fact is: 1) That a Pontifical for the Syro-Malabar rite does not exist and that it is urgent to have one, since now we have bishops of this rite.

- 18 For the apostolic letter *In Universi*, see Canc. Brev. Ap. Pius X an. 1911, Divers., lib. IX, pars 2, 607; P. Pallath, *Important Roman Documents*, 198-201.
- 19 Rome, Archives of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches (hereafter ACOC), Prot. No. 290/29, *Malabaresi-Liturgia*, Fascicolo I: Pontificale romano in lingua siriaca(hereafter PRLS); also in ACOC, *Ponenza del 19.11.1934, Relazione con Sommario*, allegato 13; *Roman Pontifical into Syriac*, 27.

- 2) That, in the opinion of these very same bishops, neither the Syrian (Antiochene) Pontifical, nor the Chaldean one can be used in the Syro-Malabar rite.
- 3) That, still according to the bishops, of the three Pontificals (Roman, Syrian and Chaldean) the Roman one is best suited to the Syro-Malabar rite.²⁰

Apostolic Delegate Zaleski, who considered the Syro-Malabar rite as a modified Roman rite in Syriac language, wholeheartedly supported the idea and through his letters endeavoured to obtain the permission of the Apostolic See for the use of the Roman Pontifical. With regard to the decision of the first Syro-Malabar bishops to translate the Roman Pontifical into Syriac and the permission of the Propaganda Fide for the translation and for the use of the Roman Pontifical in Latin until the Roman-Syriac Pontifical would be ready, the Apostolic Delegate Zaleski wrote on 28 April 1905:

After the consecration of the three native Syro-Malabar bishops, the question of the Pontifical which they had to use in the episcopal ceremonies came to the fore, since a Syro-Malabar Pontifical did not exist at all.

As at that time the three above-mentioned bishops were my guests in Kandy, I thought it was better to let them decide the question among themselves and, after having done this, they came to me saying that they had unanimously decided to ask the Holy See for the permission to simply translate the Roman Pontifical into Syriac language.

Then I asked why they had required the Roman Pontifical instead of the Chaldean one.

They answered that the Roman Pontifical was in conformity with the Syro-Malabar Missal and Ritual, while the Chaldean Pontifical had so many discrepancies that to be able to use it in Malabar it would be necessary to change the Mass also.

20 ACOC, Prot. No. 290/29, *Malabaresi-Liturgia*, Fascicolo I, PRLS; also in ACOC, *Ponenza del 19.11.1934, Relazione con Sommario*, allegato 13, *Roman Pontifical into Syriac*, 27-28.

Therefore a request was made to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda which ordered that the Roman Pontifical be translated into Syriac for the use of the Syro-Malabar bishops, granting them in the meantime the faculty to use the Latin Pontifical until the translation was made and approved by the same Congregation.²¹

Thus the first Syro-Malabar bishops obtained the permission to translate the Roman Pontifical into Syriac and the faculty to use the same Pontifical in Latin language until the approval of the Syriac translation.

The Pontifical which the Syro-Malabar bishops decided to translate was: *Pontificale Romanum Jussu Editum a Benedicto XIV et Leone XIII recognitum et castigatum*. As is evident from the title the Roman Pontifical in question, first promulgated by Pope Benedict XIV, was again revised and approved by Leo XIII, and published by the Sacred Congregation of Rites in 1895. This Pontifical is a huge liturgical book with 329 pages. After the preliminary items the book is divided into three parts with an appendix (pp. 302-329). The first part (pp. 17-122) contains various rites regarding persons such as the sacrament of confirmation, minor and major ordinations, blessings and consecration of kings, queens, military personal etc.; the second part (pp. 123-225) enshrines the blessing of the first stone for the building of a new church, consecration of churches and about 27 items of blessings of things on various occasions; the third part (pp. 226-301) has 31 rites and ceremonies, including various rites for suspension, reconciliation, deposition, degradation and restitution of those in holy Orders, excommunication and absolution, the order for the solemn reception of kings and queens, etc. This is the Pontifical, which the first Syro-Malabar bishops decided to translate into Syriac.

4. Failed Attempts for the Translation of Roman Pontifical into Syriac under the Congregation of Propaganda Fide (1896 -1917)

Even about nine years after the aforementioned decision, the Syro-Malabar bishops did not succeed in translating the entire Roman Pontifical into Syriac although some attempts were made. In fact two expert priests were selected to translate the Roman Pontifical into Syriac. They translated

21 Report of Zaleski, 28 April 1905, in ACOC, Prot. No. 290/29, *Malabaresi-Liturgia, Fascicolo I, PRLS*; also in ACOC, *Ponenza del 19.11.1934, Relazione con Sommario, allegato 14; Roman Pontifical into Syriac*, 47.

only the rites of ordination and some other parts of the Pontifical and sent them to Vicar Apostolic Menacherry, who had promised to revise and correct the text, before forwarding it to Rome, but nothing happened. In the aforementioned letter of 28 April 1905 Zaleski reported:

Meanwhile years passed and nothing was heard about the translation. Upon my observations, the response given was that it was an arduous and difficult work, which required time. However, rumours had already spread that there were discrepancies among the bishops and that one or two of them had come under the influence of (Emmanuel) Nidiri and other *Suriani* agitators.²²

Although the three bishops were unanimous about the use of the Roman Pontifical in the Syro-Malabar Church, in the course of time divergences emerged as regards the translation to be used. Perhaps because the attempts for a fair translation failed, Pazheparambil and Makil wanted to obtain approval for the partial translation of the Roman Pontifical used by two previous native bishops, Chandy (Alexander) Parambil (1663-1687) and Joseph Cariattil (1782-1786), while Menacherry preferred the new translation in preparation. On 20 November 1906 Pazheparambil wrote to the Propaganda Fide:

Prior to us there were two Syro-Malabar bishops. The first one was Alexander Parambil in 1663 and the second was Joseph Cariattil in 1781 (1782), ex alumnus of the Urban College of Propaganda. Since the first bishop knew only the Syriac language, for his use (the rite of) ordinations, consecration of altars and the most holy oils etc., were translated into Syriac language, in Rome itself, by a certain Maronite of Mount Lebanon, called Joseph and, we think, with the mandate of Propaganda. This translation was sent to Malabar through the Carmelite Fathers and the most Rev. Lord Alexander Parambil used it for ordinations and other functions. The second bishop the most Rev. Lord Joseph Cariattil adopted the same translation for his use. Now I have in my archives the very same book which was in the possession of the most Rev. Lord Joseph Cariattil. Many times I have read and compared it with the Roman

²² ACOC, Prot. No. 290/29, *Malabaresi-Liturgia*, Fascicolo I, PRLS; also in ACOC, *Ponenza del 19.11.1934, Relazione con Sommario*, allegato 14, *Roman Pontifical into Syriac*, 48.

Pontifical and find that all items were accurately translated from the Roman Pontifical. However, ordinations were arranged according to our solemn Mass.

Since the language of the Maronites is very refined Syriac – the Maronites know the Syriac language better than we Malabars – their style is better and clearer. Hence the translation made by our priests is greatly inferior to the version made by the said Maronite in Rome. Therefore we, the most Rev. Lord Makil, Vicar Apostolic of Changanacherry and I wish to have approved by the Sacred Congregation for our use the translation made by the said Maronite [...].²³

However, Menacherry proceeded according to the original decision. He judged that the translation made by the two aforementioned Malabar priests was very defective and decided to make his own new translation. Being aware of the move of the other two Vicars Apostolic, on 12 February 1907 he forwarded to the Congregation the first part of the Pontifical (the rites of confirmation and sacred Ordinations) translated by him for approval. After obtaining information about such acts of Menacherry, on 23 May 1907 Pazheparambil wrote again to the Propaganda Fide, requesting approval for the old translation of the Pontifical used by Archbishop Cariattil:

A few months ago I wrote to Your Lordship about the approval of our Syriac Pontifical. I said that I had an ancient Syriac version of the Roman Pontifical in my archives which was in the possession of the most illustrious and Rev. Joseph Cariattil, and Lord Makil and I wanted to have approval of this ancient version for our use in Malabar rather than some other new one. Hitherto I have not received any response to this letter of mine.

Now I have heard from Lord Menacherry that the Cardinal Prefect required from him a new version of the Syriac Pontifical and he sent to Rome his translation of some parts of the Pontifical. The translation which Lord Menacherry sent was not revised by Lord Makil, nor by me. Therefore we do not know what kind of translation is this.

²³ Letter of Pazheparambil to Propaganda Fide, in ACOC, Prot. No. 290/29, *Malabaresi-Liturgia*, Fascicolo I, PRLS; also in ACOC, *Ponenza del 19.11.1934, Relazione con Sommario*, allegato 15; *Roman Pontifical into Syriac*, 50-51.

Even now I and Lord Makil think that it would be better to approve the ancient version of Lord Joseph Cariattil for our use in Malabar.²⁴

With the letter of 26 June 1907 signed by the Prefect and Secretary of Propaganda Fide, Vicar Apostolic Menacherry was informed of the request made by his two other brethren in the episcopate for the approval of the Syriac Roman Pontifical used by Bishop Cariattil. However, he was asked to continue with the translation since a good part had already been done, and to transmit the translation to the other Vicars Apostolic for their examination and observations. Menacherry protested against the move of the other two Vicars Apostolic, pointed out the defects and inconveniences of using this Pontifical and informed that the new translation of the remaining parts of the Roman Pontifical was progressing. Regarding the proposal of the other two *Suriani* Vicars Apostolic to adopt the version of the Roman Pontifical used by Joseph Cariattil he wrote:

I am amazed that these Vicars Apostolic could suggest this opinion to the Sacred Congregation while they were well aware of the huge and innumerable defects existing in this version. I cite some of them here:

- 1) In very many places the said version does not correspond to the Latin original.
- 2) The instructions preceding the conferring of each Order are completely omitted.
- 3) The Mass, which is celebrated and during which the Orders are conferred (according to that version), is not the ordinary Mass, but the sung Mass which is commonly celebrated for the dead together with many priests and about two hours are required to celebrate it.
- 4) In this version that part containing the sacrament of confirmation is not found. [...].²⁵

Having evaluated the reasons espoused by Menacherry in the above mentioned letter with regard to the impossibility of immediately adopting the translation of the Pontifical used by Cariattil, on 28 August 1907

24 Letter of Pazheparambil to Propaganda Fide, in ACOC, Prot. No. 290/29, *Malabaresi-Liturgia*, Fascicolo I, PRLS; *Roman Pontifical into Syriac*, 53-54.

25 Letter of Menacherry to Propaganda Fide, in ACOC, Prot. No. 290/29, *Malabaresi-Liturgia*, Fascicolo I, PRLS; also in ACOC, *Ponenza del 19.11.1934, Relazione con Sommario*, allegato 16; *Roman Pontifical into Syriac*, 54-55.

Propaganda Fide urged him to complete the translation of the entire Pontifical and transmit it to the Congregation for the necessary revision.²⁶ However, with the letter of 11 February 1908 Menacherry requested the Congregation to approve and print the first part of the Pontifical already sent on 12 February 1907, as it was of frequent use, also because priests and faithful began to protest against the use of Roman Pontifical in Latin for ordinations even ten years after the consecration of native bishops. He indicated the reasons for the approval of the partial translation as follows:

Firstly, the clergy and people of the three vicariates of Trichur, Ernakulam and Changanacherry, already disgusted, murmur against us bishops, since we are conferring the sacred Orders not in Syriac, but in Latin. Moreover with regard to this matter they are avowedly bringing out public leaflets, they are saying many things against us and against our manner of action, namely against the conferral of sacred Orders in Latin language, even after the elapse of so many years after our consecration, that is to say, more than ten years [...].

Secondly our Syriac Ritual which we use now is still today incomplete, because only the principal part, amended and approved by the Sacred Congregation in 1845 and printed in the press of the same Congregation, was given to us. However, another part of the Ritual, namely the Order of Baptism of Adults, was approved only in 1859 and was printed by the Sacred Congregation, and until today the other parts (of the Ritual) like the exorcism etc., remain to be done. Consequently there does not seem to be any inconvenience, if a part of our Pontifical, which more than once we should use in each year, is approved and printed [...].²⁷

There were always priests and faithful in the entire Syro-Malabar Church who wanted to restore the venerable Eastern heritage and ecclesial identity, but the native bishops perceived it only as a question of language.

The project of obtaining approval for the Syriac Roman Pontifical used by Archbishop Joseph Cariattil was evidently abandoned. Hence the

26 Cf. Letter of Propaganda Fide to Menacherry, in ACOC, Prot. No. 290/29, *Malabaresi-Liturgia*, Fascicolo I, PRLS, N. 15.

27 Letter of Menacherry to Propaganda Fide, in ACOC, Prot. No. 290/29, *Malabaresi-Liturgia*, Fascicolo I, PRLS; also in ACOC, *Ponenza del 19.11.1934, Relazione con Sommario*, allegato 17; *Roman Pontifical into Syriac*, 57.

Syro-Malabar bishops demanded the approval of the first part of the Roman Pontifical, because it was of frequent use, while Propaganda Fide insisted that the Pontifical should be completely translated, in order to obtain its approval. Practically even after the elapse of several years the Syro-Malabar bishops failed to translate the Roman Pontifical into Syriac and hence they continued to use the said Pontifical in Latin for all episcopal ceremonies.

5. Renewed Attempts under the Congregation for the Oriental Church (1917-1931)

On 1 May 1917 Pope Benedict XV separated the Oriental section of Propaganda Fide and erected the 'Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Church' with the motu proprio *Dei providentis* and the Syro-Malabar Church came under its authority.²⁸ By the apostolic constitution *Romani pontifices* of 21 December 1923 Pope Pius XI established the Syro-Malabar hierarchy with Ernakulam as metropolitan see and Trichur, Changanacherry and Kottayam as suffragan dioceses. After the erection of Oriental Congregation, especially after the constitution of hierarchy, the Syro-Malabar bishops, who had failed to accomplish even a complete translation of the Roman Pontifical, often requested the Congregation to approve the partial Syriac translation they had formerly submitted to Propaganda Fide.²⁹

Because of such constant requests, the Congregation entrusted the examination of the partial Syriac translation of the Roman Pontifical to the Chaldean Bishop of Amadiyyah, Mar Francis David, who with the letter of 6 June 1929 rejected the text, saying that it was full of ridiculous expressions, grammatical errors and defective literary style. Moreover he pointed out that the interpolation of ordination ceremonies of the Roman Pontifical in inappropriate places in the *Qurbana* destroyed its structural harmony and natural coherence. He proposed that either the Syro-Malabar bishops should also adopt the Latin Mass for the ordination ceremony or they should preserve and observe the Chaldean Pontifical in accordance with the policy of the Apostolic See with regard to the Oriental Churches.

28 Benedict XV, Motu Proprio *Dei providentis*, in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 9 (1917) 529-531.

29 Cf. *Roman Pontifical into Syriac*, 66-70.

He concluded that the text was entirely defective and unworthy to be employed for liturgical celebrations.³⁰

After evaluating the observations of Bishop Francis David the Oriental Congregation asked the Apostolic Delegate Edward Aloysius Mooney to obtain from the Syro-Malabar bishops an emended and corrected translation. However, the bishops communicated to the Delegate that it was impossible for them to effect a better translation and requested him to get the work done in Rome under the auspices of the Congregation itself.³¹ Surprisingly the Syro-Malabar bishops, who reverted to the said Congregation the responsibility of correcting the Syriac translation of a part of the Roman Pontifical, never thought of the comparatively easy task of revising and updating the Syro-Oriental Pontifical for the use of their Church.

6. Consultation of Experts (1932-1934)

The request of the Syro-Malabar bishops to the Oriental Congregation was against the very scope of its erection, namely the promotion and enhancement of Eastern liturgical and spiritual heritage. Considering the intricacy of the matter and its crucial importance for the whole Christian Orient, the Congregation decided to consult more experts. With the letter of 13 December 1932 the Congregation sought the opinion of three consultants: John of the Cross OCD, Emil Herman SJ and Cyril Korolevskij SJ, on the difficult question whether it would be appropriate to approve the Syriac translation of the Roman Pontifical for the use of Syro-Malabar Church, one of the Eastern Catholic Churches.

The first two expressed favourable opinion, since the Syro-Malabar rite was highly Latinized and since the Roman Pontifical was the only one used in the Church for a long time.³² However, the third consultant Korolevskij, instead of a simple vote, made a long scholarly study, analyzing

30 Vote of Chaldean Bishop Francis David, in ACOC, Prot. No. 290/29, *Malabaresi-Liturgia*, Fascicolo I, PRLS; also in ACOC, *Ponenza del 19.11.1934, Relazione con Sommario*, allegato 4; *Roman Pontifical into Syriac*, 70-73.

31 Letter of Apostolic Delegate Mooney to the Oriental Congregation, in ACOC, Prot. No. 290/29, *Malabaresi-Liturgia*, Fascicolo I, PRLS; also in ACOC, *Ponenza del 19.11.1934, Relazione con Sommario*, allegato 5; *Roman Pontifical into Syriac*, 73-74.

32 Votes of John of the Cross and Emil Herman, in ACOC, *Ponenza del 19.11.1934, Relazione con Sommario*, allegati 7 & 8; *Roman Pontifical into Syriac*, 75-79.

the liturgical, historical and ecclesiological dimensions of the question and categorically rejected the idea of granting the Syriac translation of Roman Pontifical to the Syro-Malabar Church.³³ On 21 January 1933 the Congregation also consulted Mons. René Graffin, professor of the Catholic Institute in Paris and editor of *Patrologia Orientalis*, also with regard to the possibility of printing the Syriac Roman Pontifical under his supervision. He declared that, in his opinion it was a mischief to permit the requested translation: he would not be disposed to supervise the printing of that version even if ordered by a superior, being sure this would mean cooperating in a mischief.³⁴

With the letter of 13 December 1932, the Congregation for the Oriental Church also required the new Apostolic Delegate in the East Indies Leo Peter Kierkels to prepare an ample report, so as to arrive at a definitive solution with regard to the Pontifical. He was asked to take into account the historical circumstances of the Syro-Malabar faithful after the Synod of Diamper and the impression that could be created among them by the approval of the requested translation or the introduction of an Oriental Pontifical. He submitted the desired report on 22 June 1933. After evaluating the history of the Syro-Malabar Church and the state of the Syro-Malabar liturgy. At that time, he concluded that the Latin Pontifical translated into Syriac would conform very well to the entire post-Menezian liturgy in use for three centuries and hence recommended the correction and approval of the Syriac Roman Pontifical.³⁵

Given the contrasting opinions on this vital question, the Congregation consulted other scholars like Placid de Meester, professor of liturgy at the Greek College in Rome and Eugene Tisserant, the pro-prefect of the Vatican Library. Both of them, in agreement with Korolevskij and Graffin, unanimously rejected the Syriac version of Latin Pontifical, since it was

33 The study of Cyril Korolevskij, in ACOC, *Ponenza del 19.11.1934, Relazione con Sommario*, allegato 10 as a separate fascicle; *Roman Pontifical into Syriac*, 86-129.

34 Cf. The Report of Cardinal Fumasoni Biondi, in ACOC, *Ponenza del 19.11.1934; Roman Pontifical into Syriac*, 144.

35 Report of Apostolic Delegate Kierkels, in ACOC, Prot. No. 290/29, *Malabaresi-Liturgia*, Fascicolo I, PRLS; *Ponenza del 19.11.1934, Relazione con Sommario*, allegato 9; *Roman Pontifical into Syriac*, 79-83.

contrary to sound liturgical principles and to the policy of the Apostolic See with regard to the preservation and observation of Oriental rites.³⁶

7. The Plenary Meeting of the Congregation and the Decision of Pope Pius XI

From the time of the appointment of native vicars apostolic in 1896 on, all the Syro-Malabar bishops unanimously and persistently asked for the approval of the partial Syriac translation of the Roman Pontifical. All the four Apostolic Delegates in India, Ladislao Michele Zaleski (1892-1916), Pietro Fumasoni Biondi (1916-1919), Pietro Pisani (1919-1924), Edward Aloysius Mooney (1926-1931) and Leo Peter Kierkels (1931-1952) recommended the Syriac translation of the Roman Pontifical for the use of the Syro-Malabar Church. Among the consultants of the Oriental Congregation John of the Cross and Emil Herman favoured the approval of the Syriac Roman Pontifical, while the Chaldean Bishop Francis David and experts like Cyril Korolevskij, Placid de Meester, René Graffin and Eugene Tisserant opposed such a provision, since it was contrary to sound liturgical principles and to the policy of the Holy See concerning the heritage of the Oriental Churches.

Considering the particular importance of the question and the contrasting opinions of the experts, the Congregation for the Oriental Church decided to discuss all aspects of the problem in the plenary assembly of 19 November 1934. Cardinal Fumasoni Biondi, the Prefect of Propaganda Fide, who had formerly been Apostolic Delegate in East Indies and who had then personally studied the question of the Syriac translation of the Roman Pontifical for the use of the Syro-Malabar Church, was selected by the Oriental Congregation as the most suitable person for presenting a comprehensive report to the plenary assembly. In fact, he succinctly exposed the entire history of the efforts for the translation of the Roman Pontifical into Syriac, the endeavours of the Syro-Malabar bishops to obtain the approval of the Holy See and its decisions and provisions until that time.³⁷

36 The votes of Placid de Meester and Eugene Tisserant, in ACOC, *Ponenza del 19.11.1934, Relazione con Sommario*, allegati 11-12; *Roman Pontifical into Syriac*, 129-135.

37 This report can be found in ACOC, in *Ponenze dell'Anno 1934*; also in ACOC, Prot. No. 290/29, *Malabaresi-Liturgia*, Fascicolo II; *Roman Pontifical into Syriac*, 142-155.

The Cardinals present in the plenary assembly of 19 November 1934, in spite of careful examination and fruitful discussions, were unable to make a unanimous resolution concerning the approval or not of the Syriac translation of the Roman Pontifical for the use of the Syro-Malabar Church. Hence only a report of the plenary assembly was presented to Pope Pius XI on 1 December 1934, who made the historic decision to restore the ancient Chaldean Pontifical for the use of the Syro-Malabar Church and to constitute a special commission for the revision and printing of the said Pontifical. With regard to the decision of the Pope we get the following precise information:

The Holy Father, having heard the report, has deigned to observe that Latinization is not to be encouraged among the Orientals. The Holy See does not want to Latinize but to Catholicize. And then, half measures are neither generous nor fruitful. So continue in *status quo*, but at once appoint a commission for the revision of the ancient Pontifical, which can also be printed part by part (in fascicles). For the commission the Holy Father has deigned to propose the names of Msgr. Tisserant, Fr. Korolevskij, Msgr. Graffin, and Fr. De Meester. He wishes that the works be finished in the shortest time possible.³⁸

Perhaps, this resolution of Pope Pius XI is the most important and most courageous decision personally taken by a Roman Pontiff with regard to the liturgy of the Syro-Malabar Church, even against the opinion of four Apostolic Delegates in the East Indies and the unanimous request of the bishops of the said Church. This momentous and authoritative papal decision paved the way for the liturgical restoration and reform in the Syro-Malabar Church, gradually reinstating the Eastern liturgical spirit and leading to the publication of new liturgical books.

38 "Il Santo Padre, udita la relazione, si è degnato di osservare che non bisogna incoraggiare fra gli Orientali il latinismo. La Santa Sede non vuole latinizzare, ma cattolicizzare. Le mezze misure poi non sono né generose né fruttuose. Si continui quindi nello *status quo*, ma si nomini subito una Commissione incaricata della revisione del Pontificale più antico, che si potrà stampare anche a fascicoli. Per la Commissione si è degnato di fare i nomi di Mons. Tisserant, di Padre Korolevsky, di Mons. Graffin e di Padre de Meester. Vuole che i lavori siano condotti a termine nel più breve tempo possibile". See the Report of the audience with the Holy Father, in ACOC, *Ponenze dell'Anno 1934* (Plenaria del 19 Novembre 1934); also in ACOC, Prot. No. 290/29, *Malabaresi-Liturgia*, Fascicolo II: Pontificale caldeo ad uso della Gerarchia malabarese (hereafter, PCUGM); *Roman Pontifical into Syriac*, 158/322.

With the letter of 6 December 1934 the Secretary of the Oriental Congregation Cardinal Luigi Sincero communicated the supreme decision of the Roman Pontiff to Apostolic Delegate Kierkels, asking him to inform the Syro-Malabar bishops of the pontifical decision.³⁹ Mar Augustine Kandathil, archbishop of Ernakulam received the decision of Pope Pius XI with maximum deference and immediately communicated the same to his suffragan bishops. The Apostolic Delegate wrote to the Oriental Congregation:

No sooner had I received your most esteemed official letter no. 290/29 of 6 December (1934) with regard to the Pontifical for the Syro-Malabar Rite than I hastened to communicate the content to Msgr. Archbishop of Ernakulam, who in his turn has informed his suffragan bishops about it. Now I am well pleased to assure Your Most Rev. Eminence that the distinguished Prelate has welcomed with the maximum deference the decision of the Holy Father assuring me that “he will be always pleased to follow the instructions of the Holy See, whatever they may be”.⁴⁰

Although the Syro-Malabar bishops always clamoured for the approval of a Syriac version of Roman Pontifical for their Church, they accepted the supreme decision of the Roman Pontiff with due submission and respect.

8. The Pontifical Commission for the Revision and Compilation of the Syriac Pontifical(1936-1938)

In accordance with the decision of the Pope, the Congregation for the Oriental Church constituted the commission for the revision and publication of the Chaldean Pontifical with Msgr. Eugene Tisserant as president, Fr. Cyril Korolevskij and Fr. Placid de Meester as liturgists, and Fr. Paul Hindo and Arnold Van Lantschoot as specialists of Syriac language. Msgr. René Graffin, resident in Paris, was not called to become a member

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- 39 Communication of the Decision of the Holy Father to the Syro-Malabar bishops, in ACOC, Prot. No. 290/29, *Malabaresi-Liturgia*, Fascicolo II, PCUGM; *Roman Pontifical into Syriac*, 158-159.
- 40 Letter of the Apostolic Delegate to the Oriental Congregation, in ACOC, Prot. No. 290/29, *Malabaresi-Liturgia*, Fascicolo II, PCUGM, no page number; *Roman Pontifical into Syriac*, 160.

of the commission, because of his old age and sickness. To Fr. De Meester was also assigned the office of the secretary of the commission with the charge of writing the reports. On 2 May 1936 the Holy Father personally approved the commission as proposed by the Oriental Congregation, expressing his desire that the work be started as soon as possible.⁴¹

On 15 June 1936 the president of the commission Bishop Tisserant was elevated to the dignity of a cardinal and on 19 June 1936 he was appointed secretary (at that time the prefect was the Pope himself) of the Oriental Congregation. Hence on 15 April 1937 James M. Vosté OP, consultant of the same Congregation and expert of Syriac language was appointed as president.⁴²

The commission (27 sessions) examined all the important manuscripts, revised the texts, composed the entire Chaldean Pontifical and concluded its work in 1938. A Latin version of the entire Pontifical was also made to facilitate the examination of theologians, Roman experts and Cardinals unable to read Syriac. The said Latin translation, *Pontificale iuxta Ritum Eccleiae Syrorum Orientalium id est Chaldaeorum* was printed in four parts: part I—ordinations up to the episcopate inclusive (1937); part II—ordination of patriarch and other minor rites regarding persons (1938); part III—consecration of altar and all other rites concerning things such as the blessing of oils (1938), part IV—monastic rites, preceded by a dissertation on the doctrine of the Syro-Oriental Pontifical (1938).⁴³

9. Approval of the Pontifical (1939-1942)

On 3 July 1939 the printed Latin text of the revised Chaldean Pontifical, together with the proposals and resolutions of the pontifical commission, was submitted to the examination of the plenary assembly of the Oriental Congregation. The Relator, Cardinal Ermenegildo Pellegrinetti in his Report enucleated the history and manner of the work

41 Cf. *Foglio per l'Udienza del Santo Padre*, in ACOC, Prot. No. 290/29, *Malabaresi-Liturgia*, Fascicolo II, PCUGM.

42 Letter of Oriental Congregation to James M. Vosté OP, in ACOC, Prot. No. 290/29, *Malabaresi-Liturgia*, Fascicolo II, PCUGM.

43 S. Congregazione “pro Ecclesia Orientali”, Prot. N. 290/1929, *Pontificale iuxta Ritum Eccleiae Syrorum Orientalium id est Chaldaeorum*, partes I-IV, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis 1937-1938.

of the commission, criteria for the printing, content of the Pontifical and difficulties with regard to some Nestorian theological expressions. The Cardinal particularly emphasized that the Nestorian doctrinal questions had to be resolved by the assembly.⁴⁴

The plenary assembly of the Congregation for the Oriental Church approved the Pontifical, but asked the commission to clarify some points that gave rise to suspicions of a theological character. The suspicion of the Cardinals about the authenticity of some expressions is understandable before the Second Vatican Council, when the Assyrian Church of the East was considered really "Nestorian". After due clarifications, on 9 July 1939 the resolutions of the assembly were submitted to Pope Pius XII (Pope Pius XI died on 10 February 1939), who in principle approved the Pontifical, but ordered that before the printing the work should be submitted to the examination of the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office (at present Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith).⁴⁵

However, according to the longstanding praxis Oriental liturgical books were not submitted to the Holy Office for examination. On 27 January 1940 Cardinal Tisserant obtained an audience with Pope Pius XII and humbly expounded to him that it "would be the first time that the Congregation of the Holy Office would intervene as regards the liturgical books of an Oriental rite" and hence it would be contrary to the constant praxis with regard to the publication of Oriental liturgical books. He also presented to the Pope the opinion of the commission that "not the entire work, but only the small doubts of a theological nature be subjected" to the Holy Office for its examination.⁴⁶ The Pope accepted the proposal and authorized the Cardinal to submit only a few doubtful expressions of theological nature to the Holy Office which, after due clarifications, gave its definite confirmation on 22 May 1942.⁴⁷

44 Report of Cardinal Pellegrinetti, in ACOC, *Ponenze dell'Anno 1939, Roman Pontifical into Syriac*, 170-177/330-336.

45 Report of the Papal Approval in ACOC, *Ponenze dell'Anno 1939; Roman Pontifical into Syriac*, 183-184/342.

46 Written presentation Cardinal Tisserant to the Pope in ACOC, Prot. No. 290/29, *Malabaresi-Liturgia*, Fascicolo III: Revisione e stampa del Pontificale caldeo (a partire della sec. plenaria del 3 luglio 1939), no. 15; *Roman Pontifical into Syriac*, 196-197/ 352-354.

47 For details and documentation, see *Roman Pontifical into Syriac*, 193-203.

10. Printing and Official Publication (1957-1958)

Unexpected set-backs, the Second World War (1939-1945) and the difficulty to find a suitable press for printing the restored Pontifical in Syriac impeded its immediate publication. At last in 1954 the press of the St. Joseph's University in Beirut undertook the printing of the Pontifical in Syriac and completed the work in 1957. The typical edition of the Pontifical in Syriac, entitled *Liber Officiorum Pontificalium secundum usum Ecclesiae sanctae Syrorum Orientalium* was officially published in Rome in 1957 for the use of the Churches of the Syro-Oriental tradition. Thus the Pontifical which the St Thomas Christians used until XVI century was restored.

On the Great Sunday of Resurrection, 8 July 1958 the Congregation for the Oriental Church applied the Pontifical to the Syro-Malabar Church by the publication of *Ordo persolvendi ritus pontificales iuxta usum Ecclesiae Syro-Malabarensis*, which contained also special instructions and rubrics for celebration.⁴⁸ The *Ordo* applied the rites of consecration of new Churches, re-consecration of defiled churches, consecration of portable altar (*deppa*) and consecration of holy oil, as well as the Ordination rites of lectors (*karyya*), subdeacons (*beupdiakna*), deacons (*m'samsana*), priests, archdeacons, *chorepiscopi*, bishops and metropolitans. The other items of the Pontifical were not immediately relevant for the Syro-Malabar Church, since at that time it was not a major archiepiscopal or patriarchal Church.

11. Malayalam Translation and Implementation of the Pontifical (1958-1959)

After the elapse of several years when the Syriac Pontifical was ready for use, the tendency of employing vernacular in liturgical celebrations was already in vogue and hence there arose the need of translating it into Malayalam. On 22 November 1957 under instruction from the Congregation for the Oriental Church a few copies of the Pontifical were dispatched from Beirut to Mar Joseph Parecattil, Archbishop of Ernakulam (1957-1984) for distribution among the Syro-Malabar bishops. The Congregation sent the Pontifical to Cardinal Parecattil, directing him to translate it in six months time. The Congregation ordered that the new

48 Sacra Congregatio pro Ecclesia Orientali, *Ordo persolevendi ritus pontificales iuxta usum Ecclesiae Syro-Malabarensis*, Romae 1958.

Pontifical be used compulsorily from 1 January, 1959, but upon request permission was granted to continue the old system for another year.⁴⁹ As Cardinal Parecattil states: "By the end of 1959, the translation was completed and as directed by the Congregation was commissioned for use. The long cherished dream of some of us here was realized."⁵⁰ The Pontifical in Malayalam began to be used for priestly ordinations in 1960, although the first episcopal consecration took place only in 1968. However, at that time the entire Pontifical was not translated into Malayalam and introduced into regular use.

12. Modification of the Pontifical and a Set of New Books (1965-2007)

Mar Joseph Parecattil, the Chairman of the Syro-Malabar Liturgical Committee realized that there were defects and repetitions in the Pontifical. Hence attempts were made to reform it. Firstly a new rite for the consecration of churches was compiled. With regard to this Cardinal Parecattil states:

I got the defects remedied and the prayers shortened. Consecratory rituals were enlarged. According to my directions along these lines, Fr. Abel prepared a prayer book, and published it, titled *Pallikoodasa*. It was revised and published again as *Devalaya Prathista* (dedication of churches). [...] The book has not been formally approved by the bishops' council, but it is being invariably used now and nobody has objected to it.⁵²

At the time of the blessing of the Basilica at Ernakulam in 1974 the book was again revised and republished as "Solemn Consecration of Churches" and it was used in the entire Syro-Malabar Church for the consecration of churches.⁵³ New texts were formulated also for sacred Ordinations. Cardinal Parecattil states:

49 Cf. J. Parecattil, *Syro-Malabar Liturgy as I See It*, Ernakulam 1987, 40.

50 J. Parecattil, *Syro-Malabar Liturgy as I See It*, 40.

51 The new Pontifical was used for the first time on 24 February 1968 for the episcopal consecration of Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry, Bishop of Kottayam.

52 J. Parecattil, *Syro-Malabar Liturgy as I See It*, 44.

53 J. Parecattil, *Syro-Malabar Liturgy as I See It*, 44.

[...] the Central Liturgical Committee appointed a sub-committee on 30.3.1967 with Bishop Valloppilly as chairman and Fr. Lucas CMI as convener. It appears that the committee never met. Still due to the over enthusiasm of Fr. Silas C.M.I., two prayer books, 'Order of Granting Minor Orders', 'Order for Ordination of Priests', were published with the note 'Pro-manuscripto'. The two books were scrutinized and published by the Central Liturgical Committee.⁵⁴

However, these books were "tried only in the Archdiocese of Ernakulam and a few other dioceses, even as an experiment".⁵⁵ In the course of time these new books began to be used in all the dioceses in the then ecclesiastical province of Ernakulam. For the episcopal consecration, different booklets with modifications were compiled. Evidently these books were not canonically approved by the competent ecclesiastical authority.

13. A Common Pontifical for the Entire Syro-Malabar Church (1996-2007)

On 16 December 1992 the Syro-Malabar Church was granted major archiepiscopal status; the first session (20-25 May 1993) of the Synod itself constituted a synodal commission of three bishops for liturgy.⁵⁶ Under the synodal commission the efforts for the reform and renewal of liturgy, also with the aim of producing common liturgical books for the entire Syro-Malabar Church, progressed considerably.

The synod of 3 to 15 November 2003 approved the draft of the rites of Episcopal Ordination and Priestly Ordination and the rites of the Installation of Bishops, Archbishops and Major Archbishop.⁵⁷ The synod of 22 August to 3 September 2005 sanctioned the Ordination rites of *Karyya*, *Heupdiakna* and *M'samsana*.⁵⁸ Moreover, the text of the blessing of Oil was given to the synodal Fathers so that they might discuss it in their eparchies and give their observations to the liturgical commission.⁵⁹ The synod of 9-11 January 2006 approved the rite of blessing of the Holy Oil (Holy Myron).⁶⁰

54 J. Parecattil, *Syro-Malabar Liturgy as I See It*, 44.

55 J. Parecattil, *Syro-Malabar Liturgy as I See It*, 45.

56 Cf. *Synodal News*, no. 1 (August 1993) 7.

57 Cf. *Synodal News*, vol. 11, no. 2 (December 2003) 19 & 36-37.

58 Cf. *Synodal News*, vol. 13, nos.1 & 2 (December 2005) 24.

59 Cf. *Synodal News*, vol. 13, nos.1 & 2 (December 2005) 23.

60 *Synodal News*, vol. 14, nos.1 & 2 (November 2006) 51.

The Pontifical of the Syro-Malabar Church containing the: Rite of *Karyya*, *Heupdiakna* and *M'samsana*, Rite of Priestly Ordination, Rite of Episcopal Ordination, Rite of Installation of Bishops/Archbishops, Rite of Installation of Major Archbishop and Rite of Blessing of the Holy Oil, was forwarded to the Congregation for the Oriental Churches on 5 May 2006 for prior review in accordance with canon 657 § 1 of the Eastern Code. On 20 March 2007 the Congregation granted the canonical *Recognitio* and thus the way was paved for the publication of a canonically approved Pontifical for the entire Syro-Malabar Church.

With the decree dated 15 August 2007 Major Archbishop Cardinal Varkey Vithayathil promulgated the new Pontifical, indicating that it would be effective from 14 September 2007 and declaring that “all other texts hitherto in use for administering the above-mentioned Pontifical Rites stand abrogated from the same date.”⁶¹ As determined by the Major Archbishop, the new Pontifical came into force on 14 September 2007 and it is invariably used in the entire Syro-Malabar Church, since the bishops themselves who approved the Pontifical are the only celebrants of pontifical ceremonies.

However, one may note that the new Syro-Malabar Pontifical is not complete, since it does not contain all the pontifical rites enshrined in the Syriac typical edition. In the course of time some of the remaining rites were published as separate books: the first and final profession of religious and profession of the members of secular institutes as well as consecration of churches, consecration of portable altar (deppa) and re-dedication of churches (2013).

Conclusion

After using the Roman Pontifical for more than three centuries, because of the strong intervention of Pope Pius XI and the indefatigable efforts of the newly erected ‘Congregation for the Oriental Church’ the Syro-Oriental or Chaldean Pontifical was again revised and restored for the benefit of Syro-Malabar Church. As in the case of other liturgical books, a section of this Church again deviated from the typical edition promulgated by the Oriental Congregation and produced unapproved liturgical books, thus creating two kinds of pontifical ceremonies. The promulgation of the present common Pontifical will surely contribute to the creation of basic liturgical unity and the enhancement of Eastern heritage in this Church.

61 The Decree of promulgation can be found in the beginning of the *Order of Pontifical of the Syro-Malabar Church* (Malayalam), Kochi 2007.